

1857

Gibson, James
Bochim, or the weepers.

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BOCHIM, OR THE WEEPERS;

A SERMON

PREACHED ON THE 27TH NOVEMBER,

BEING THE

DAY OF HUMILIATION

ON ACCOUNT OF

THE INDIAN MUTINY.

BY THE REV. JAMES GIBSON,

OWEN SOUND.

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[A D V E R T I S E M E N T .]

This Sermon was composed in the ordinary course of Pulpit ministration, and without the most distant view to publication. By many of those who heard it, it was deemed worthy of a permanent record, and a wider circulation; and on their presenting a requisition to publish it, it was readily complied with, in the hope that what gratified them might also be the means of benefiting others.

In the process of extending his short-hand notes, the Author may have altered some sentences, and added or erased others; but, *substantially*, the sermon is printed as it was preached; and with all its defects must abide, of course—as by its appearance in this form it challenges—the award of the Public.

J. G.

OWEN SOUND, 7th December, 1857.

SERMON.

JUDGES II. 1-5.—“*And an angel of the Lord came up from Gilgal to Bochim, and said, I made you to go up out of Egypt, and have brought you unto the land which I sware unto your fathers; and I said, I will never break my covenant with you; and ye shall make no league with the inhabitants of this land; ye shall throw down their altars. But ye have not obeyed my voice. Why have ye done this? Wherefore I also said, I will not drive them out from before you; but they shall be as thorns in your sides, and their gods shall be a snare unto you. And it came to pass when the angel of the Lord spake these words unto all the children of Israel, that the people lifted up their voice and wept. And they called the name of that place Bochim, and they sacrificed there unto the Lord.*”

“The children of Israel” were “a peculiar people”—peculiar in their origin, peculiar in their progress, peculiar in their destiny. They were God’s “peculiar people.” He bestowed on them peculiar privileges. To these a special reference is made in the text. Even when slaves in Egypt they were the objects of his peculiar care, insomuch that “the more they were afflicted, the more they multiplied and grew.” And when the time of their emancipation came, “even the set time,” He brought them out with a strong hand and an outstretched arm, from the house of their bondage, and gave them for a possession the “goodly land” of Canaan—driving out its native inhabitants, more numerous by far, and more powerful than they, before them; and maintaining with them, through their leaders, the most constant, and immediate, we might almost call it, personal communication. Yet were they “a stiff-necked and rebellious people.” Their wanderings for forty years, and the fall of an entire generation in the wilderness, are the proof to us, as they were to themselves the punishment, of their heinous sins. The new generation carried with them into the land of Canaan the same discontented and

disobedient spirit that had prevented their fathers from entering it; and on many occasions it displayed itself in a manner so flagrant as to subject them to immediate chastisement. Our text describes one of these, and contains a message from "the angel of the Lord," that is, as is generally understood, from the Lord himself—the Second Person of the Godhead in an angelic form—charging his people for whom he had wrought such a deliverance, on whom he had bestowed so many and such distinguished favours, with disobedience, aggravated by ingratitude, and forewarning them of chastisements of which their own sins were the cause, and would be the instruments.

Were "the children of Israel" peculiar in this respect, my friends? Are not we, as a people, placed very much in a similar position? Do not we occupy now a high and prominent place among all the other nations of the earth, such as the Israelites did at the time referred to; and are not our privileges, under the Christian dispensation, greater and more distinguished than even theirs were under the Mosaic? Is not their deliverance from Egyptian bondage but a type, and an inadequate one, of our deliverance from the slavery of Satan; and does not the earthly Canaan given to them for a possession, with all its fertility and beauty, furnish but a faint idea of the heavenly, promised to us for an inheritance? And then, when we think of the means, respectively, by which their, and our, deliverance was achieved, and their, and our, inheritance secured, Oh how little room is there for comparison! Yet have *we*, any more than they, "rendered unto God according to the benefits received," or "obeyed his voice," which, from considerations alike of duty and obligation, should fall on our ears with resistless, with all-constraining effect? Have we not, by our disobedience and ingratitude, given Him most frequent and just occasion to verify in our experience the threatening that He addressed to them. "I will visit your transgression with the rod, and your iniquity with stripes?"

"Profitable," as it might be, "for reproof, for correction, and for instruction in righteousness," to extend the parallel

between the Israelites and ourselves, on the general grounds that have just been indicated, we have selected the passage for altogether a different purpose—with a specific view to the special object of this day's meeting, the improvement, namely, of the disastrous and most deplorable events that have recently taken place in India. To these we shall see it, as we proceed, to be most appropriate; and the points of analogy that may be traced between Israel's position viewed relatively to the native inhabitants of Canaan, at the period to which it refers, and Britain's position viewed relatively to the mutinous Sepoys in the Presidency of Bengal at the present time, are neither few nor faint. They can escape the observation of no person of discernment; and they will receive the grave and deliberate consideration of every person of a reflecting mind.

Why, the very name of the place, where the Israelites now were, is significant, and is alike obvious and easy of accommodation to our own case. What is the name? "*Bochim.*" What does it mean? "Weepers." Why did they give that name to the place? Because of the tears which they there shed. And what more appropriate name could be found for *Cawnpore*, for example, for *Lucknow*, for *Delhi*, for the other principal seats of the Indian mutiny, and those scenes of carnage and cruelty, treachery and torture, dishonour and death, which were there enacted? From the very description of these scenes we turn away horrified and heart-sick. Oh, what then must it have been to witness them, to be actors in them, sufferers by them? Does not the "great cry" set up by our countrymen and countrywomen and their children ring yet in our ears? and is there not still throughout the British dominions "a voice heard, lamentation, and weeping, and great mourning," England "weeping for her children and refusing to be comforted, because they are not?" Yes; the devastating hurricane that burst in Bengal is now felt, in its recoil, in the very heart of the British empire, while its wrecks are to be found scattered on the shores of its remotest dependencies. Wherever Britons are, there will be found "weep-

ers" over this dreadful catastrophe, and "Bochim" not inappropriate, on this account, as a name for the entire empire, might be most fitly inscribed over the portals of hundreds of its dwellings, and is literally descriptive of the relief which thousands of its subjects have been seeking for their over-charged hearts. According to one estimate, "3000 Europeans, eight missionaries, and six chaplains, with their wives and daughters, have been slain and dishonored in the course of the Indian mutiny." How many "weepers" will there be over this holocaust to Sepoy rage and lust? We ask the question that you may form some idea of the *numbers* directly involved in the sad calamities on account of which we have this day met, to humble ourselves before God; while of the *extent* to which particular individuals and families have suffered by them, the following cases may be taken as an illustration. They are said to have been narrated by a minister, when officiating on the day of humiliation observed in Great Britain, and have gone the round of the public prints. The one is that of a gentleman of the minister's own acquaintance, who had lost *twenty-two* relatives in India, within the space of six weeks. The other, that of a family party numbering *thirteen*, who met last year in St. Andrews, Scotland, and who had all, with a solitary exception, fallen victims to the Indian mutiny.

But into the details of this disaster, we do not mean to enter; nor shall we harrow up your feelings, or try the strength of our own, by a recital of the atrocities, wanton in many cases, as they were fiendish in all, by which it has been throughout distinguished. For this we refer the curious to the public prints, whose tales of horror, though falling far short of the reality, we, for our part, have ceased to peruse. Much has been suppressed by them as not fit to be published, and much of what they have published is not fit to be pronounced from this place. The great facts of the case must be well enough known to all who take any interest in passing events; and those whose interest has not been excited by all that has been spoken and written, for months past, about the Indian mutiny,

would not be much the wiser for anything that could be said now respecting it, within the limits of a single discourse.

The few general statements on which we have ventured will serve their purpose, if they leave on our minds the impression that the visitation which we deplore has been widely diffused in its general character, and intensely agonising in particular cases; if they help us to realize more vividly the analogy that we have been tracing between British India and the whole British empire as connected with it at the present time, on the one hand, and the congregation of Israel at the time referred to in the text, on the other; if they lead us to see and constrain us to admit the propriety with which the former may now take to itself the name that the latter gave to the place where they then were, the place of "weepers," "*Bochim*." And,

Why has British India and the British empire been converted into a *Bochim*? For the same reason that the camp of Israel was. "The angel of the Lord," the Lord himself, as we have already explained, comes up to us, charged with the same message that he delivered to them. And in further discoursing from this message, there are *three* points to which your attention shall be briefly directed, viz.. The *sins* committed; the *punishment* inflicted; and the *repentance* exhibited.

First—The sins committed. Sepoy treachery, Hindoo superstition, and heathenish cruelty were only the *secondary* causes of the Indian mutiny. Its real, active, and ultimate cause is to be sought for elsewhere—it is to be found in *sin*. All suffering is the result of sin, for "God does not afflict willingly nor grieve the children of men." And when special sufferings are inflicted, when signal judgments are experienced, it becomes those who are visited with them to seek out, if haply they may discover, their special cause, the particular sins of which they are sent as the appropriate punishment. In these Indian calamities, God has been applying the rod to us, as he frequently did to his ancient people. Like them, we have been unfaithful to our trust, forgetful of our obligations; and confronting us now, as he did them at *Bochim*, his lan-

guage to us is the same—"Ye have not obeyed my voice ; why have ye done this ?"

Some will ask, perhaps, what have we done? wherein have we disobeyed? where are the proofs of our ingratitude or of our unfaithfulness? They are not far to seek, nor difficult to find. It were easy to draw out a long list of national sins, in the view of which the Indian disaster would appear to be nothing more than a righteous retribution, "a punishment less than our iniquities have deserved." Pride and ambition ; immorality in its most revolting phases, and irreligion of the most God-defying type ; the love of money and the love of conquest, with their natural and hideous offspring, extortion, oppression, injustice, and cruelty ; not to speak of those numerous and flagrant crimes of which human law takes cognizance, and for which earthly judges punish. Look at this black catalogue, and say if there is reason either for complaint or astonishment, when, in the course of his providence, God makes his voice to be heard as it were from the highest heavens ; and in tones at once solemn and awe-striking, fitted alike to arrest the attention and impress the heart, asks, "Shall not I visit for these things? Shall not my soul be avenged on such a nation as this?"

But we may come closer still. We think that the British nation may read in the judgment on account of which it has been called by its rulers to humble itself, the punishment of *sins committed against India, and the millions of its population*. Amid much diversity of opinion on collateral points, there is, so far as we have had the means of judging, very considerable harmony on this one, as expressed by the press, and from the pulpit or the platform. Some, indeed, dwell principally on the advantages that India has derived from British connection and influence ; but these are constrained to admit that they have been associated with many draw-backs, and neutralized, in but too many cases, by grievous injuries. Others, again, dwell chiefly on the opportunities of doing good that have been neglected by the British in India, the positive and great evils

that they have perpetrated there, and the encouragement that they have given to the idolatry that is there practised ; while they refer only indirectly to the benefits reaped by India from its British connection, and represent them as by no means a counter-poise to the others. We do not presume exactly to apportion the two. We admit both the evil and the good, and are willing to assign their due place and prominence to each. But balancing the one against the other, which predominates ? Making all allowance for the good done, what an amount of evil perpetrated, and of good that might have been done but was not, remains to be accounted for ? Without discussing the question as to whether Britain came righteously by her Indian possessions, it will be admitted even by those who take the most favorable view of this question, that "*right*" was not always regarded, when "*might*" could achieve or acquire the object on which the representatives of British power had set their hearts, and that the interests of the natives were frequently, and recklessly, and shamefully sacrificed to personal cupidity, and national aggrandisement. Cowper, the faithful Mentor to his country, and fearless denouncer of her sins, placed the spoliation of India and the oppression of its inhabitants, foremost in the list of those national crimes for which God was punishing England in his time. Far be it from us to detract from the brilliant exploits of Robert Clive, or Warren Hastings ;—but only the blindest of admirers or the most prejudiced of partizans will venture to deny the duplicity practised by the former, or to palliate the atrocities perpetrated by the latter. The glories of Clive's military career are sadly tarnished by the falsehood and treachery that, in many parts of it, characterized his diplomacy ;—as, for instance, in the matter of supplanting Surajah Dowlah, the Nabob of Bengal, by a creature of his own. The glories, again, of Hastings' administrative career are still more stained by the exactions, alike unjust and exorbitant, of which he was guilty, in the case for example, of the Rajah of Benares ; and by the cruelties, which, to secure compliance with his demands,

he perpetrated on those who had given him no offence, and were suspecting no injury;—as when he forced one Nabob who had nothing to give him, to confiscate, for the replenishing of his coffers, the treasures of *his own mother and grandmother*,—the Princesses of Oude, and when he hired his soldiers to another, to seize the peaceful and prosperous territory of a neighbour, and to enslave and oppress “the finest population in India,” as the Rohillas are designated by one of the most brilliant of living writers.

Who will say that God is not visiting for “*these things*” now?—that he is not punishing the sins of a former generation, on the present? Nor is the present generation itself without sin as regards India. Admitting that it was a lawful conquest, or a fairly won prize, has that extensive and magnificent country been governed and managed on those wise, righteous, and Christian principles which a nation like Britain should recognize, and on which it should act in all parts of its dominion? Has that regard been paid, which should have been, even to the *material interests* and *physical condition* of its hundred millions of inhabitants? Let the *opium trade*,—to take only one example—answer the question. A most extensive trade that is—the East India Company exporting not less than a hundred thousand chests annually—a most lucrative trade, but a trade carried on, not more certainly for the enrichment of the Company, than for the demoralization and destruction of multitudes of their fellow men in the East. Yea, we have not only been, and still are, traffickers in this poison for the soul as well as the body, but we have compelled reluctant nations, like the Chinese, to become our customers for it. *We* have done so, and not the Company alone, for the traffic is sanctioned, or at least connived at, by the British government, it is permitted by the British people, and the power and the *prestige* of both are lent to aid and abet such forcible measures, for its maintenance, as have just been referred to. “Partaking thus of their sins” can we wonder, or shall we complain, when, as in the recent calamities, we “receive also of their plagues?”

Turn we now to what Britain has done, or rather *not* done to ameliorate *the moral and spiritual condition* of her Indian subjects, and our consciences must be more seared than was that of Pharoah's butler, if we are not constrained with him to say—"We do remember our faults this day." It is for this very purpose that the day has been set apart by the Government of this Province, and by the Session of this Congregation, and God grant that the slight review now to be taken of our "faults," our national faults in connection with the religious state and prospects of India, may deepen our penitence on account of them. And here we dwell not on the flagrant immoralities practised by the British in India, and the injurious influence that they must have exerted on the religion with which they would naturally, and universally be identified. But what have we done, as Christians, for the evangelization of that quarter of the globe, and its teeming millions? For a long period we did nothing. Nay, means were systematically employed to prevent anything being done. No Christian missionary was permitted to reside in the territory. The authorities, both on the spot and at home, were afraid to offend the prejudices of the natives, and, content with gaining their own secular ends, paid no attention to their spiritual interests. They were kept in entire ignorance of the Scriptures, and of the way of salvation by our Lord Jesus Christ. Well, therefore, and most truly might an eloquent writer say,—“If our Indian conquests were to be as suddenly lost as they had been speedily acquired, not a trace would remain to shew that pagan India had ever been held in subjection by a professedly Christian nation.” At the time that he uttered these words of burning reproof and withering reproach, pagan India had been subject to professedly Christian Britain, *for more than half a century*. Nor was this all. Not only was Christianity thus carefully excluded from our Indian possessions for more than fifty years, but Hindooism, Mohammedanism, Buddhism, and heathenism in all the various forms that it assumes there, were countenanced and encouraged, directly and in many dif-

ferent ways. While the Bible was shut out of the government schools, the Vedas, the Shasters, and the Koran were regularly read, and their doctrines systematically inculcated. While Christian missions were discouraged, contributions were made in support of idol temples. While the first preachers of the Gospel were ordered to leave the country, every indulgence was granted, alike to the priests and the devotees of India's million gods. While the most effectual measures were taken to prevent the true religion from gaining a footing, measures as effectual were adopted to secure that the false religions which were already flourishing, should strike their roots deeper and wider in the soil. It is true that for a considerable number of years past, this policy, as baneful in its results as it was unchristian in its character, has been greatly modified. British connection with Indian idolatry has to some extent, been broken up. Some of its "horrid cruelties" have been put down. The presence of missionaries in the country has been tolerated. But their labours have not been encouraged. The conversion of the nation is not wished. It is not more strange than true, that this has actually been punished as a crime. For no other reason than that he had become a convert to Christianity, a Sepoy was discharged from his regiment, the chaplain who baptized him was reprimanded, and an enquiry was instituted to discover if any of his comrades had been accessory to the result. If they had, they of course would also have been dismissed. Neither previous good conduct, nor present earnest entreaty could avail for the reversal of the sentence; and the words with which he left the commanding officer, might well have crimsoned his cheek, as they should impart a deeper tone to our penitence this day,—"*You will allow me to serve your King, but not your God.*"

Details of this description might be multiplied indefinitely; but judging even from the specimen that has been given, have we done our duty by India? Have we been true to the trust committed to us, as a Christian nation, when that rich and extensive country was added to the British dominions? Are

we not “verily guilty” in reference to the millions of our brethren there whom we left, as we found, sunk in ignorance, superstition, and brutality? Have we not been guilty of the very sins as connected with them, with which “the Angel of the Lord” charges the Israelites in the text? “Ye shall make no league with the inhabitants of this land; ye shall throw down their altars: but ye have not obeyed my voice.” No; the altars of heathenism are still standing in India, and we have made a league with its inhabitants, in maintaining the idolatrous systems to which they are dedicated, instead of labouring for their overthrow, and for the establishment on their ruins of the worship of the one living and true God, and the way of salvation by our Lord Jesus Christ. And now God is saying to us with a voice of terror, and in a tone of indignant remonstrance—“Why have ye done this?” He is calling on us to learn the enormity of our sin from the severity of our sufferings. He has been threatening to wrest, from our grasp, the territory which we have so much misgoverned, and, from our sway, the teeming population, of whose best and highest interests we have been thus grossly negligent. It is long since one of themselves said to a British official—“Your Government alone has prevented India from becoming a Christian country.” That is a grave charge; and who will deny its truth? That is a heinous sin; and who will affirm that even the recent disasters and horrors form too severe a punishment for it? The attempt has been made to trace the sad events that we deplore to-day, to the labours of the few missionaries who have been sent to India; but the attempt has utterly failed. Some of these self-denied men fell victims to the mutiny, as we have already seen; but the charge of being either the cause or the occasion of it, either directly or indirectly, has fallen to the ground. There is no room even for suspicion. The *London Times*, an impartial witness in such a case, and one not particularly prejudiced in favour of the parties whose acquittal it pronounces, whose innocence it asserts, has given this utterance on the subject—“The peril has

been created not by the presence of Christian missionaries, but by the absence of Christian soldiers." It is a favorable sign of the times—a token for good—the harbinger, we trust, of the speedy introduction of a new system, religious as well as political, of managing India—to find that journal ascribing the calamities which we deplore to the neglect of the Sepoy's instruction in Christianity, and so, by implication, acknowledging this as one of the national sins on account of which we have reason to humble ourselves before God. Let us keep *it*, then, specially in view, while the others that have been mentioned are not overlooked in the services of this day ; let us humble ourselves on account of them all, but especially on *its* account ; and pray that from them all, but especially from *it*, we may be kept for the time to come.

This much for the sins that we have committed, and for the analogy subsisting between them and those charged in the text by the "angel of the Lord" against "the children of Israel." Now let us consider,

Secondly—the punishment inflicted ; and here a similar analogy may be traced between our own case and Israel's. The punishment of the Israelites was that they did not obtain undisturbed possession of the promised land. Instead of being exterminated, its native tribes were left to harass and torment them—to become, in the words of the text, "thorns in their sides," and their "gods a snare" unto themselves. *Our* punishment has been the revolt of our Indian army, and the massacre of multitudes of our countrymen, and countrywomen, and their helpless children, in circumstances of unheard of horror ; the suspension of all law and order throughout the Presidency of Bengal ; the temporary triumph of rebellion there ; and the threatened loss of our Indian possessions. After what has been already said on these subjects, however, we do not revert to them. Our punishment is plain enough. We all know what it is ; multitudes feel it in the tenderest part ; but what we wish you to notice here is its *ultimate author*, and its *intermediate instruments*.

What said "the angel of the Lord" to the children of Israel? "*I will not drive them (the Canaanites) from before you;*" and even so, He says now to us in reference to the sad calamities above enumerated—"have not *I* done all these things?" Yes! God is the author of the Indian tragedy; and we do not look at it aright unless we see it to be his work. National calamity, like personal or relative affliction, is from God. The former is the discipline of nations, as the latter of individuals and families. There are those, we know, who don't believe this; and that is the very reason why we bring it so prominently forward. Loss of health, with them, is simply the result of violating natural laws—the laws of their physical constitution. Famine and pestilence are simply the product of natural causes, operating on fixed principles beyond men's controul, or superinduced by negligence or criminality on their own part. And war is simply the effervescence of human passion—of pride and ambition, of cruelty and the love of conquest. This is the creed of the atheist; but many, who repudiate this name, hold practically the sentiments just enunciated, aye, and publish them, too, in a form all the more ensnaring that the cloven foot is concealed, and that the being of a God, though virtually denied, is verbally admitted. But if God exists, he is the Governor of the universe. If he ever made this world, he also rules it. If it was not beneath his dignity to do the one, it is not beneath his dignity to do the other; while the most insignificant event can as little be removed beyond the sphere of his notice, as the most momentous can be placed beyond the reach of his power. The idea of a fatherless world, of a world that is created by God, and then left to shift for itself, is incompatible alike with the moral and the natural attributes of the Divine Being. To cherish such an idea is to impeach not only his wisdom and power, but also his justice and goodness. It is, indeed, to place him in the same category with the unnatural husband and parent, who deserts his dependent partner, and throws his helpless progeny on the tender mercies of an unfeeling public.

This much even on principles of *reason*. And now for *revelation*. If there is such a thing—if there is any truth in those Holy writings which we all believe to be “given by inspiration of God”—if the Bible is not, from beginning to end, “a cunningly devised fable,” “verily there is a God that judgeth in the earth.” He is a “fool that says there is not;” and he is a liar who, admitting God’s existence, denies his Providence—a Providence, alike exhaustless in its resources and minute in its surveillance—regulating and over-ruling, for its own purposes, the destinies of empires, yet watching over the “fall of a sparrow,” and “numbering the hairs of our head.” We deny not the operation of *secondary causes*, or their influence upon the condition of individuals, families, and nations; but we maintain that these are but instruments in God’s hands, working under his direction, and evolving his secret and sovereign purposes. The most sedulous attention to the laws of health will not always keep away disease, just as the utter disregard of them, in other cases, does not engender it. “Affliction cometh not from the dust, neither doth trouble spring out of the ground.” And where, then, is its source? Just where Job sought it—“I would seek unto *God*, and unto God would I commit my cause;” and where David found it—“In very faithfulness *Thou* has afflicted me.” And as with personal, so with national calamity. “Shall there be evil in a city,” asks the prophet Amos, “and the Lord hath not done it?” When the Assyrian power was broken in pieces, whence came the stroke under which it first staggered and then fell? Isaiah tells us, “The Lord of hosts hath purposed, and who shall disannul it? and his hand is stretched out, and who shall turn it back?” The same prophet, addressing God, in another place says, “when *thy* judgments are abroad in the earth, the people will learn righteousness,” clearly implying that whether men will learn the lesson or not, God is the teacher whose judgments are abroad in the earth. Let us, my friends, sit docilely, as we profess this day to do, at the feet of this teacher; let us “humble ourselves under the mighty

hand of God," as it has been lifted up against us, in the matter of the Indian mutiny. This is the part of interest as well as of duty ; for what shall be the end of those who will not "hear the rod," nor see the hand that wields it? "Lord, when thy hand is lifted up, they will not see; but they *shall* see, and be ashamed, * * yea, the fire of thine enemies shall devour them."

We have acknowledged the operation of secondary causes, the employment of subordinate agents by God in the accomplishment of his purposes. And so far from wishing to ignore, or even conceal them, in the case of the present calamity, we call on you to notice them particularly, in connection with its ultimate author. The instruments employed by God in punishing his ancient people on the occasion referred to in the text, were the native inhabitants of Canaan. He made *them* to be "thorns in their sides, and their gods to be a snare unto them." And what language could more accurately describe the agency employed by God in punishing our sins against India? Who were the mutineers? Were they not the native inhabitants of that country—the Sepoys. And what were the means by which they effected their purpose? Was it not by *treachery*? "snares," and death by torture, produced by slow and painful means, like being pricked to death with "thorns?" It is instructive to observe this coincidence ; and while we observe it, let us feel that *now* as *then* "our own iniquities have been correcting us, and our own backslidings reproving us." Here the very people whom we had injured became, in the hand of God, their own avengers and his. Look back again, on some of our sins against our Indian brethren, as formerly noticed, and you will see that from like sins against us we are now suffering. Were they the dupes of our deceit? We are the victims of their treachery. Did we treat them with cruelty? "With the same measure," only "pressed down, and shaken together, and running over," "has it been measured to us again." Pride we mentioned as another of our national sins ; and of nothing in India, perhaps, were we more proud than of

our army—a native army, commanded by British officers. We had raised and trained it; fought and conquered with it; and what, we were ready to ask, could we not do with such an army? Yet that very army has nearly been our ruin, at least in India. By it were all our conquests there placed in jeopardy, yea, and the very *prestige* of our arms in all parts of the world. The object of our pride has thus been converted into a scourge for our punishment. And where is that army now? Disorganized, dispersed, annihilated. Let us learn from dear-bought experience to say with one who was himself a great warrior as well as a mighty king—“Some trust in chariots, and some in horses, but we will remember the name of the Lord our God.” “It is better to trust in the Lord than to put confidence in man; better to trust in the Lord than to put confidence in princes.”

Another of our sins against the people of India, our greatest sin, was *neglect of their spiritual interests*. And the baneful consequences of that neglect we are now reaping. We did not teach them the religion of Jesus; and they have treated us, and especially our countrymen and countrywomen who fell into their hands, in the spirit of their own religion. It is a religion of “horrid cruelty.” It sanctions the desertion and even the destruction of sick and aged relatives, and marks with its highest approval the self-infliction of torture, and the presentation of human sacrifices. What was it to the devotees of such a system to imbrue their hands in their officers’ blood? And what treatment had the wives and daughters of those officers to expect, other than they received, when, with the sanction of the same religious system, they hold their women in contempt, and, till a late period, burned their widows; when they ornament their temples with obscene pictures, and walk about, themselves, in open day, in a state of nudity! And what shall *we* say to these things, when we remember that that religious system was long patronised by the British Government, and its idols and their temples supported by British treasure! Is it not in righteous retribution

for our sin, in "making a league with the inhabitants of the land, and not throwing down their altars," that they have thus proved thorns in our sides, and a snare" unto our countrymen? Had we been as careful to instruct the Sepoys in the Gospel of peace, as we were to teach them the art of war, the treason that has been perpetrated might never have been meditated. But we taught them the one, and they have turned our instructions against ourselves. We neglected to teach them the other; and dearly, dearly have we paid for our neglect! Have we paid too dearly for it? Has our punishment been too severe? Far be such a thought from our minds? "Is there unrighteousness with God? God forbid." While we condemn ourselves on this day of humiliation, let us, at the same time, justify *His* procedure, saying, "We have sinned, and have committed iniquity, and have done wickedly, and have rebelled, even by departing from thy precepts and from thy judgments; neither have we hearkened unto thy servants the prophets, who spake in thy name to our kings, our princes, and our fathers, and to all the people of the land. O Lord, righteousness belongeth unto thee; but unto us confusion of faces, as at this day." This introduces us naturally to the

Third and last department of the subject, viz., the repentance exhibited.

Ancient writers tell us of a savage tribe, who, when it thundered, shot their arrows and threw their javelins, in defiance, against the sky; and even so there are some men living in civilized and Christian lands, who "set their mouth against the heavens," and "harden their necks" under God's reproofs. This is daring wickedness, extreme folly. "Let the potsherd strive with the potsherds of the earth," but "woe unto him that striveth with his Maker." The Israelites, on the occasion referred to in the text, "show us a more excellent way;"—"they lifted up their voice and wept, * * and they sacrificed there unto the Lord." Our meeting here to-day is evidence, so far, that we feel disposed to follow their example in

this respect. But genuine sorrow, let us remember, and especially penitential sorrow, courts seclusion, though on all proper occasions it does not shrink from publicity. Let us see, then, that we weep over our sins, national and personal, when alone with God in our closets, and when surrounding with our families the domestic altar; as well as when convened with our Christian brethren, on a day like this, in the sanctuary of God. And let the tears that we shed in all the three places, be tears of contrition on account of *sin itself*, and not merely on account of its consequences. Ah, it would require a large bottle to hold all the tears of *natural affection* that have been shed over the Indian mutiny. Would one of the same dimensions be required to contain those of *penitential sorrow*? The two may with all propriety be mingled; for religion does not eradicate or suppress, it only regulates and elevates our natural feelings; but tears purely of the former description are not the tribute that such a day as this calls for; they do not constitute “the fast that God hath chosen,” and that we profess now to be keeping. Let this be the confession of our hearts—“Against *thee*, thee only have we sinned, and done evil in thy sight.” Let the true reason of our sorrow be expressed in these words—“rivers of waters run down mine eyes, because they keep not thy law.” And feeling that we cannot weep enough over our own sins, and the sins of our people as formerly enumerated, let us make Jeremiah’s lamentation our own—“O that my head were waters, and mine eyes a fountain of tears, that I might weep day and night for the slain of the daughter of my people.”

But the children of Israel not only “lifted up their voice and wept,” they also “sacrificed unto the Lord.” And so let us do. But what shall we sacrifice? The *sins*, surely, for which we profess to be so sorry. Though dear to us as a right eye, let us pluck them out. Though useful to us as a right hand, let us cut them off. What of all the tears that we shed over them, if we still persist in their commission? It is only adding hypocrisy to the already long catalogue. Reformation

must be the evidence of repentance ; and it is only when “ sin is forsaken ” as well as confessed, that we are promised mercy. Yea, consistency itself requires this ; for what worth is humiliation on account of sins which we do not abandon ? or of what avail will prayers be for their pardon, if we still indulge in their commission ? The mighty God, the Lord himself, has answered these questions—“ If my people will humble themselves, and pray, and turn from their wicked ways,” not otherwise, it is implied “ I will hear from heaven, and forgive their sins.”

This passage suggests another “ sacrifice ” appropriate to this occasion. “ Let our *prayer* be set forth before God as incense, and the lifting up of our hands as the evening sacrifice.” To this exercise the Proclamation expressly calls us, and a specific object is mentioned, viz., prayer for the success of our arms in India. But in this we have been anticipated. God has verified the promise—“ And it shall come to pass, that *before* they call I will answer.” For Delhi is taken ; the head-quarters of the rebellion are broken up, and the out-posts, it may be expected, will ere long be dismantled, and the entire Presidency brought back to its allegiance. Let us, however, give thanks for the victory that we do not now need to ask, and be encouraged to pray that it may be only the first of a series of victories, to follow in rapid succession—the harbinger of the speedy return of peace and security to Bengal.* But let us not by any means restrict our prayers to this one object, important as it is. Let us pray also, that these sad calamities, when overpast, may leave a blessing behind—that

* Since this discourse was delivered, the intelligence has also been received of the relief of Lucknow—a *relief* indeed, not only to the brave-hearted, long-beleaguered, and much-enduring garrison of that place, but also to the public mind of the British empire. It furnishes, at the same time, an additional cause of gratitude for the past and ground of hope for the future. In connection with other successes, indeed, it leaves no doubt of the ultimate subjugation of the rebels, and speedy restoration of tranquillity and order to the well disposed portion of the community.

they may be sanctified to the immediate sufferers, and to the entire nation—and that they may lead to such a change in the administration of Indian affairs as to facilitate, instead of retarding as hitherto, the evangelization of that colossal empire. Yes, for the poor Indians themselves, even the treacherous Sepoys, claim, as they need, an interest in our prayers; and this will not be denied them by those, at least, who have the spirit of Him who, in the very article of death, prayed for his murderers—"Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do!"

Again, let us "sacrifice here unto the Lord," those timid and time-serving principles, those maxims of worldly policy which have hitherto prevented us from effecting, or even attempting on anything like an adequate scale, the Christianization of India. Let us be as true to our religion as either Hindoo or Mahometan can be to theirs. Let us no longer pay greater deference to their opinions and prejudices, than to the dictates of Scripture and the commands of God. What have we gained by this in times past? Only their contempt, and His rebuke; and if we would either command their respect, or secure His approval, for the time to come, we must turn over an entirely new leaf. We must adopt the motto of the first Christians,—“We ought to obey God rather than men;” and while we do not offend unnecessarily the prejudices of the heathen, nor provoke imprudently, their hostility, we must make it the rule of our conduct. Had we done so when India came first into our possession, how very different might its condition to-day, have been; and how very different our own position in reference to it? Let us, profiting by past miscalculations, and errors, do our duty now; and leave results with God. *Duty* to his sovereign was the guiding principle of a great warrior and statesman, lately gone from among us; and how much more should *duty to their God* be the watchword of every Christian man, and of every Christian nation? To the laconic sayings of the Duke of Wellington, great weight is attached; and there is one which we cannot forbear quoting

in this connection. One of his chaplains asked him on one occasion, What is the use of preaching the gospel to the heathen? "What are your marching orders?" was his reply; "are they not, *go ye into all the world and preach the Gospel to every creature?* Yes, most unquestionably they are, and they are to be obeyed, though tumult and commotion should be the result—aye, though "the world should be turned upside down." "The Captain of salvation," himself said, "I am not come to send peace on earth, but *a sword*;" and shall his soldiers keep "the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God" in its scabbard, because it may provoke the devotees of idolatry to draw *theirs* in defence? Shall they shrink from the conflict of truth with error—of *God's* truth with man's fables, as if distrustful of its power, or desponding of its triumph! Elsewhere, the same "meek and lowly" Jesus says, "I am come to *send fire on the earth.*" And his gospel would not be what it is—it would but belie its name, if it did not burn up such systems of religion, falsely so called, as degrade, and pollute, and curse India. It is to our shame that this fire is not already kindled; and recent disasters will not be lost upon us, if they tend to stimulate our zeal, and thus, reflexly, to fan and blow into a flame the merely "smoking flax" of Indian Christianity.

But there is another sacrifice still, which it is but right that we offer, here, unto the Lord. It is thus enjoined by one of his Apostles—"To do good and *to communicate*, forget not, for with such sacrifices God is well pleased." Money has been called the sinews of war; and it is as necessary in the war with India's heathenism, as with the Sepoys' rebellion. How much is required to equip, to send out, and to maintain an adequate force of Christian missionaries for the Indian service? Let the cost be carefully counted, and cheerfully paid. Here, we have an opportunity of returning, with interest, some of the treasure, wrung by injustice and fraud from our fellow subjects in the East. Shall it be taken advantage of? If not, the humiliation of such a day as this is a

mere *sham*. If it is—means, and adequate means, will not be wanting for this evangelistic enterprise. How utterly inadequate is the present force of Indian missionaries! Of them we may well say as Andrew did of “the five loaves and two fishes” that were forthcoming to feed five thousand men, “What are these among so many?” What are they? They are, as nearly as may be, in the proportion of *two* missionaries to *three millions* of people! To our shame be it spoken! Let such a blot remain no longer on our Christian generosity, on our natural humanity. “Freely ye have received, freely give.” The appeal in behalf of the British sufferers by the Indian mutiny has been nobly responded to; but let us not forget the Indian sufferers by British neglect and parsimony; nor let us turn a deaf ear to the appeal which, by their condition, if not with their lips, they send across the seas, “Come over and help us.” God, by his judgments, is pleading with us on their behalf. He is saying, “Break off your sins by righteousness.” One of these, doubtless, is “robbing Him of the tithes and offerings” that His service in India requires. Now, then, let us place them upon His altar, and ourselves in a position to expect and experience the fulfilment of the appended promise—“Bring ye all the tithes into the storehouse,
 * * and prove me now herewith, saith the Lord of hosts if I will not open you the windows of heaven, and pour you out a blessing, that there shall not be room enough to receive it.”

JAN. 6/31

